

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 18591 281625Z

ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6086

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USMISSION BERLIN

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AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

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AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 18591

BELGRADE ALSO FOR USDEL CSCE

USIA FOR IOP, IBS, IPS, IEU

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, CSCE, SHUM, UR

SUBJECT: LITERATURNAYA GAZETA ARTICLE ON SHCHARANSKIY CASE

REF: MOSCOW 18479 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: LITGAZ ARTICLE CHARACTERIZES WESTERN

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 18591 281625Z

CONCERN ABOUT SHCHARANSKIY CASE AS INTERFERENCE

IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND IMPLIES THAT TRIAL WILL

OCCUR DESPITE POSSIBLE NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON BELGRADE

AND U.S./SOVIET RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. LITERATURNAYA GAZETA CONTINUES RECENT SOVIET

JOURNALISTIC COMMENTARY ON SHCHARANSKIY CASE (REFTEL)

WITH ARTICLE DECEMBER 28 BY VIKTOR VALENTINOV AND BORIS ROSHCHIN ENTITLED: "BLACKMAIL: AN ANTI-SOVIET CAMPAIGN." WE ASSUME FBIS WILL PROVIDE FULL TRANSLATION AND THAT DEPARTMENT ALSO HAS TASS ENGLISH-LANGUAGE SUMMARY OF DECEMBER 27.

2. ARTICLE HAS NOTHING NEW TO SAY ABOUT CASE AGAINST SHCHARANSKIY, FOCUSING INSTEAD ON CHARGES THAT WESTERN CAMPAIGN ON HIS BEHALF CONSTITUTES INTOLERABLE INTERFERENCE IN SOVIET INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND VIOLATS LONG-ESTABLISHED PRINCIPLE THAT ONLY COURTS CAN DECIDE MERITS OF SUCH A CASE. RADIO LIBERTY IS PORTRAYED AS TOOL OF ZIONIST AND ANTI-SOVIET CIRCLES IN FURTHERING THIS CAMPAIGN WITH "ARTICLES PREPARED AND CORRECTED BY CIA." MOST OPENLY ANTI-SEMITIC COMMENTARY COMPARES SHCHARANSKIY CAMPAIGN TO ORGANIZATION OF A ZIONIST DEVIL'S SABBATH ("SVISTOPLYASKA").

3. THE AUTHORS INFORM THEIR READERS THAT "VOICES ARE HEARD ACCORDING TO WHICH A SHCHARANSKIY TRIAL MAY INFLUENCE US/SOVIET RELATIONS", ENDANGERING A NEW SALT AGREEMENT AS WELL AS OTHER BILATERAL AND MULTI-LATERAL AGREEMENTS. THE AUTHORIS INSIST THAT ONLY THE SOVIET COURTS WILL DECIDE ON SHCHARANSKIY'S GUILT, OR THE DEGREE THEREOF, AND THAT NEITHER

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 18591 281625Z

FOREIGN PETITIONS, NOR PROTESTS IN THE U.S. CONGRESS OR THE U.N., WILL HELP "LAW BREAKERS." THEY EXPRESS REGRET THAT "SOME PROMINENT USG FIGURES" HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN SUCH A CAMPAIGN. THE AUTHORS CONCLUDE ON A SELF-RIGHTEOUS NOTE: "THE LAW IS STRICT, BUT IT IS THE LAW. AND THE BELGRADE MEETING HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH IT."

4. COMMENT: THAT SHCHARANSKIY WILL BE TRIED IN ACCORDANCE WITH NORMAL SOVIET JUDICIAL PROCEDURES IS IMPLIED, IT SEEMS TO US, BY THE ARTICLE'S DELIBERATE ENUMERATION OF POSSIBLE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF SUCH A TRIAL ON BELGRADE, ON US/SOVIET RELATIONS AND IN PARTICULAR ON SALT. INDEED, THE POINT OF THE ARTICLE SEEMS TO BE TO REJECT ARGUMENTS FROM ABROAD ABOUT THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF A TRIAL, AS WELL AS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT FOREIGN SUPPORT CANNOT ASSIST "MISGUIDED" SOVIETS WHO VIOLATE SOVIET LAW IN THE NAME OF HUMAN RIGHTS. BUT IF THE POINT THAT THERE WILL BE A TRIAL IS CLEARLY SIGNALLED, THE QUESTION OF WHAT THE CHARGE WILL BE IS ONCE AGAIN LEFT OPEN, THE ONLY POTENTIALLY OPTIMISTIC NOTE IN THIS HIGHLY

PROPAGANDISTIC ARTICLE. IF THE SOVIETS SHOULD OPT TO BE RELATIVELY LENIENT WITH SHCHARANSKIY, THIS ARTICLE AND OTHERS LIKE IT COULD BE CITED, FOR FOREIGN AS WELL AS DOMESTIC AUDIENCES, AS EVIDENCE THAT THE COURT'S "DECISION" WAS NOT INFLUENCED BY FOREIGN PRESSURE. WE HAVE NO INDICATION THAT THE CASE WILL GO THIS WAY, HOWEVER, NOR CAN WE BE SURE AT THIS POINT THAT THE AUTHORITIES HAVE FINALLY DECIDED HOW TO HANDLE THE MATTER.
TOON

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Message Attributes

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